

NARRATIVE AND REPORT

OF A

Temperance and Educational Mission

On the Eastern Shores of Nova-Scotia,

AND OF OTHER MATTERS

CONNECTED WITH THE HALIFAX TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

Circumstances having made it incumbent on the officers of the Halifax Temperance Society, to appeal to their fellow citizens and fellow countrymen, generally, concerning objects in which all are deeply interested,—they deem it wise to lay a brief report of their proceedings and an exposition of their projects, before the public. Those who speak by means of this address, happen to be placed prominently in the work which they advocate,—but the cause is that of every man, woman, and child, in the country;—the Officers and Committee are the agents of the public, and on the sympathies and assistance of that public they have the strongest claims, if they can show that their conduct has been faithful, and that their project is not only praiseworthy, but that its furtherance is essential for the general prosperity.

The influences which are opposed, in these efforts, are those of Intemperance and Ignorance;—it might be considered superfluous, in any age of the world, to advance reasons for attacks on these barriers against man's efficiency and prosperity,—it would seem particularly so in the present day, when moral questions are so generally and justly appreciated. But although all may admit that Temperance and Education are great beneficial objects, much lamentable apathy, as regards active co-operation, may exist;—cold assent is not enough; living, energetic conviction, urging to the fruits of hearty sympathy, is requisite,

and with this, vast and most delightful results might be anticipated.

Notwithstanding the extensive local sphere which the Society had around them, the great importance of a Mission to the country parts of the Province, was pressed on their attention, about three years ago, and they undertook the enterprise. They heard of the cause languishing, of Societies declining, of intemperance renewing or extending its hold; and they believed that the visit of a faithful messenger would do much good, in reviving, reorganizing, forming new Societies, and generally extending the influence of a principle of the utmost consequence to public and private prosperity. The enterprise was attended with pecuniary risk, and some might think it hazardous as regarded such responsibility; but the evil which might result from neglect, and the good which might be expected from exertion, seemed too great to admit of hesitation, when any opportunity for action appeared. The Committee to whom was entrusted the subject resolved on the attempt;—they sent the Rev. Mr. Knowlan, west, and Rev. G. J. McDonald, east, and gave sanction and hearty thanks to Judge Marshall in his gratuitous services, and the result has triumphantly proved the wisdom of daring to do good under difficulties. Inestimable benefits have followed the endeavour; the pecuniary debt which remains can easily be discharged by a little public exertion; and the whole expense should not be put in comparison with a very small part of the good achieved. The Mission has opened up new paths of usefulness, and has reacted on the Home Society; its principle was, to improve opportunities wherever they appeared, instead of resting satisfied with attacking barriers near at hand, which were stubborn in resistance, and might be best impressed by the general progress. This is the spirit of Missions in every cause; and the generous feeling which impels them is never without due reward coming back to the bosom where it originated. The home-field should be carefully cultivated; but a Mission abroad, occasionally, may plant valuable germs in the wild and solitary place, which may bear fruit abundantly, and thus add to the general riches.

The recent Mission of Rev. G. J. McDonald to the Eastern Shores, seems to demand particular attention at the present time; it therefore forms the chief feature of this report, other matters being only incidentally introduced. Last Spring, facts illustrative of the educational destitution of the shores were brought to the notice of the Mission Committee, and they were advised to connect enquiries and some exertions, in this important matter, with Temperance objects. An appeal had been made to the Legislature, respecting the Shore Settlements; sympathy was expressed, but nothing was done; and to humble, private exertion was left the task of attempting the accomplishment of some immediate good. Education seemed a fitting companion to Temperance. It would be a glorious work to supplant the bottle by the book;—to remove a cause of idleness and ignorance, and introduce the germs of mental activity and knowledge,—to rout a vicious indulgence, which, under the mask of pleasure, was misery in itself and misery in its results,—and to establish the true pleasures which arise from moral, religious education,—from the School-house, the domestic fireside, and the place of worship. The Temperance exertion, by the blessing of Providence, cast devils from the dwelling and made it clean and garnished, but some occupants should be provided for the vacancy, lest lukewarmness and relapse should be experienced. Therefore, hand in hand with Temperance, go the blessings of Education, rational recreation and Religion; Temperance is the natural forerunner, the assistant of these, and cannot be a solitary virtue. With such views the Committee directed their Missionary on the shores, to make educational objects part of his duty,—to enquire into the state of Education, and to advance it in any manner within his power. He performed his task, reported his progress, and from his report the subjoined outline-narrative, has been drawn.

Respecting the subject generally, the Missionary remarks, "that from the commencement of the Total Abstinence Reformation, success has always been in proportion to well directed efforts," and he argues that this must

continue to be so, for that the scourge of Intemperance needs exposure only, to cause its expulsion from society. He considers that the adoption of the Total Pledge instead of the partial, by means of the Missionary labours, is of much consequence, as being the effectual mode of banishing temptation, and preventing the perpetuity and growth of depraved appetites. He reckons the Nova-Scotia Pledged Temperance Army, at 30,000 strong, and rejoices in the victories which such a number, if faithful and efficient, may achieve, towards the entire emancipation of the country from one besetting vice. He considers that great good has been done throughout the western part of the Province, but, in the true spirit of a Missionary, he dwells more forcibly on that part where help is most required, and where difficulties most abound.—The want of roads, schools, and the ministrations of religion, along the Eastward, calls for more than usual sympathy and assistance.

The coast Eastward from Halifax, along a winding line of 200 miles, has many features of interest. It abounds in fine harbours; teems with fish; and has picturesque headlands, coves, islands, and rivers. It is capable of agricultural improvement in many parts,—and, from Halifax to the Strait of Canso, possesses a population of about ten thousand souls. The want of roads makes travelling, except by water, very difficult;—and, to a great degree, prevents communication between the Harbours and other Settlements. As an instance of this, the Missionary states, that about three years ago, two young women, while on their way from Isaac's to New Harbour, a distance of but seven miles, lost their path and perished. Trees, rocks, bushes, and all the rugged particulars of the wilderness, make a dangerous labyrinth, where a comparatively small expenditure would give an easy and pleasant road.

As might be expected under such circumstances, the dwellings, appurtenances, and implements of the Settlements, are of an humble description. The cottages want the attractive appearance of those in more favoured districts; in fields and gardens advantage is not taken of

various facilities, as regards fish-offal, and such manures, which should frequently be used instead of sea weed ;— and, in several respects, the full benefit is not obtained from the means of humble comfort, which are within the reach of honest industry. This is matter of regret and remedy ;—it does not arise from inactivity, or want of means, generally speaking, but from inattention, and the absence of that education which would greatly increase the general intelligence. In places where Schools and Churches appear, the soil and the dwellings almost invariably improve in character ; showing that comfort and prosperity are always connected with intellectual and moral advancement.— Modern farming implements are unknown in some Settlements,—sleds are used summer and winter, and, from Mr. Holit to Canso, the Missionary did not see a cart or wagon. Such matters mark privations which should not be allowed to continue among an industrious and well informed people.

Though the scenery of the coast is impressive, and occasionally grand, the difficulties in the way of a traveller make the course irksome, except he be impelled by higher motives than those of the tourist. The desire to raise and inform, to save from evil and to do good, may well triumph over much greater obstacles than those presented on the shores of Nova-Scotia. They have impelled men to visit dungeons and deserts, to dare pestilential swamps, and to face death in many forms. Still the toil of travelling along a coast where roads are scarcely known, is great, compared with the same number of miles in more favoured parts ; a guide is required between the Settlements ; and, on the water, frequently, while cheerful beams enliven the interior, dense fogs prevail, adding to apprehended dangers from shoals and rocks.

Much diversity, in personal characteristics, appears along the coast. A traveller sees, broadly marked, the various races which agree in making the Province their home. The aboriginal inhabitants have there the wigwam and canoe,—the descendants of the Pastoral Acadians retain the simple, hospitable manners of other days,—Germans and Dutch exhibit the sturdy industry

which defies seemingly insurmountable obstacles,—English, Scotch and Irish display the peculiarities of those great sections of the United Kingdom whence themselves or their fathers came,—the sons of Massachusetts men vary the amalgam of character by some of the sagacity for which New England is noted,—and many Nova Scotians are there, with all the feeling of nativity in favour of the soil ; giving additional ties to the adopted home of their parents, or rearing children and grandchildren themselves, who look on the “new country” as sufficiently rich in antiquity and ancestral feelings.—The seclusion of these settlements, and the amphibious habits of many of the people, cause very striking differences, as compared with interior villages and hamlets.

Jedore, Ship Harbour, and Pope's Harbour, has, each, an Episcopal Church. At the first, a School-house was in course of erection ; the second had the advantages of a School, but the introduction of the itinerating principle was requisite in consequence of the circumstances of the people, and the varied situations of their dwellings. Pope's Harbour had neither School nor School-house. Thence to Sheet Harbour was similarly destitute ;—but from Sheet Harbour to White Islands, Schools and good moral teachers have been introduced, within the last two years. From the Bay of Islands, to St. Mary's, a distance of seven leagues, occupied by several hundred people, never had the benefit of a regular School. From St. Mary's, by Indian, Fisherman's and Holland's Harbours, to Country Harbour, a distance which includes above 1000 souls, there is but one School. This is situated at the head of Country Harbour,—an advantageous position, with good land, a river navigable for large ships, and abundance of fish. If education were in accordance with other advantages, 3 Schools might be sustained at this place. At Isaac's harbour two School-houses were in course of erection,—and at New Harbour 100 acres of land had been purchased for the use of a School which was projected, in connection with a place of worship. From New Harbour, by Tor Bay, White Head and Dover, to Canso, a distance of ten leagues, neither Schools

nor School-houses were found,—and out of a population of 500, about 50 only had enjoyed the advantages of the rudiments of education. Canso is situated at the Eastern extremity of Nova Scotia, on the side of Chedebucto Bay, in the neighbourhood of a great fishing station, and about four leagues from Arichat in Cape Breton. It contains nearly 500 inhabitants, but the place might accommodate, under good arrangements, ten times that number. Much desire was manifested at Canso, respecting Education, and a few persons guaranteed the sum of £50 for the services of a competent teacher. This and neighbouring places, are greatly indebted to the zeal of a few persons, who have laboured, successfully, for the general improvement,—proving that persevering, individual effort may accomplish much, if well directed, and sustained by a sense of duty and a principle of exalted charity. One benevolent person erected a place of Worship between Canso and Tittle, and occasionally officiates himself, while his daughter has been the main support of a valuable Sunday School: “Their reward is sure”.—Generally, along the Eastern Shores, public Worship is conducted by laymen.—Fishing is the chief employment in this direction,—the fishing materials used around Chedabucto, are estimated at £20,000; and these require renewal about every fifth year. While the men are engaged at the fishery, the women attend to the households and field crops, cheerfully and efficiently.

About 20 miles from Cape Canso is the Strait of Canso, which divides Nova Scotia proper from the Island of Cape Breton. The breadth of the Strait averages from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to above 2 miles, it is 25 miles in length, and the passage through is made interesting by beautiful and impressive scenery.—Cape Breton has many historic recollections, it abounds in valuable minerals, its scenery is majestic, and its population industrious and prosperous.—The Missionary commenced his exertions, on the Island, at Ship Harbour, proceeded to Plaister Cove, Arichat, River Inhabitants, Port Hood, and other places,—meeting, in each, with individuals who were perseveringly labouring for the general prosperity, and whose exertions

were of great value to the circles of their influence. Contributions were made during his visit, for which he has accounted with the treasurer; and in many places the great cause which he represented had taken deep root, and exhibited abundant promise of future good.—Amid wild glens of Wycocomagh, he witnessed a Sacramental season which was replete with scenic interest, with earnest attention of the communicants, and with similarity to other highland congregatings, in the native land of the Settlers. Some C. Breton farms and schools, which would serve as excellent models, might be particularised in terms of warm eulogy;—much land has been brought into cultivation recently, the population has advanced, rapidly, in numbers and in comfort; and where the traveller, ten years ago, saw wilderness tracts, occupied by the wild denizens of the forest only,—he now may exult in landscapes varied with pasture and meadow and corn field, and marked by the “heaven pointing spire” rising above the pleasant cottages of the hamlets.

The visits of trading vessels, are mentioned by the Missionary, relative to the effect which they have had on the morals of the population of the Shores. Unfortunately, the practice was to carry Rum as one of the articles of traffic,—this not only introduced and supplied a cause of vice and misery, but prepared the way for foolish purchases of other articles, which resulted in difficulty and poverty. The comforts of life might be considered beyond reach, by some of the poor people, who were thus acted on and tempted; and yet means would be squandered on the “liquid fire,” on tobacco, and articles of frippery, which would not be thought of under better influences. This evil is cause of much regret, and a most happy change would be, for traders to carry on business in useful merchandize, without the introduction of an article, the purchase or gift of which, may be worse in its results, than the loss of money or produce without any return.—At a certain Harbour, one of these dispensers of Rum, was encountered by the Missionary;—the place, formerly, took the article in considerable quantities, and experienced corresponding penalties;—the travelling-dealer

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opposed the progress of Temperance, as a foe to the worst part of his traffic ;—but the people, true to themselves, stated their determination, freely, particularly the female portion, and the temptation failed. Connected with this part of his subject, the Missionary declares the good tidings, that there was not, at the time of his visit, a gallon of the liquor drank, where formerly a puncheon was consumed,—and that progress in reform was everywhere evinced.

In some places lamentable evidence was afforded, that the vicious habit of tippling had sorely afflicted the population ; in others, several causes combined to retard improvement. Painful instances need not be dwelt on further than public good requires.—At one place a few leagues from Halifax, settled above 40 years, and which had a population of about 400 persons, a regular Common School had never been possessed,—and only one fourth of the population could read prayer-book or bible. At another place of similar population, but one family had any acquaintance with the first rudiments of Education.—In many places much destitution prevailed, respecting secular and religious teaching, and access to books of any description. Instances of extreme distress, as might be expected, have been witnessed, as the results of circumstances growing out of the unfortunate habits and the moral destitution to which allusion has been made.

Some delightful contrasts to the more melancholy features exist. The Missionary records notices of Settlements extremely secluded, shut in by wilderness and sea, small in number, and winning subsistence by severe toil,—which yet enjoyed comfort and respectability, because good habits, kindly feeling, and domestic instruction, exerted their hallowed influences.

Concerning the more destitute Settlements, it may be said, that, as regards assistance, connected with the formation of roads, the establishment of schools, and the building of school-houses and places of worship, neglect is not excusable in consequence of any vicious or repulsive disposition of the people. On the contrary, they are hospitable, kind to strangers whatever the denomination, grate-

ful for visits and attention, willing to be instructed, and ready for improvement. The Missionary bears testimony to those good qualities ; and what a noble basis they form for the exertions of christian philanthropy and philosophy. The people readily co-operated in the formation of Temperance Societies,—they evinced eagerness for the advantages of education,—and of books. More than once did the Missionary behold tears of joy on the cheeks of the wife and mother, as the husband became pledged to give up the vice which beset him,—and the child joined in the holy vow. Often did the people regret that the exertion was not made earlier,—and often contrast their position with what it would have been, if, for twenty years back, tippling was unknown and some degree of learning was a pursuit. The Missionary brought some books, tracts, and papers with him, and much gratitude was evinced for their distribution. In one Settlement, several young persons, who had the advantage of a Sunday School, very eagerly sought for New Testaments. In another place a woman, to whom a Bible was given, declared that its weight in silver would not be more valued, and that she had been for several years desiring such a treasure.—Another woman begged that attempts in forming a school should be persevered in, and declared her willingness to save from her daily bread, rather than that her children should not have intellectual food. In many places the people anticipated, with much anxious hope, the improvement of the growing generation by the means now in progress. At Canso the Missionary proposed giving some lessons to those who desired improvement,—and to his surprise nearly ninety persons assembled, including ages between 9 and 50 ; and the good disposition resulted in arrangements for a regular school. These are dawns, which, if wisely improved, may be considered pledges of a moral day of brightness and beauty.

The Missionary was instrumental in establishing six Common Schools, and in procuring teachers for the same ; also in forming eight Sabbath Schools. He distributed about 300 pamphlets, several copies of the Scriptures, and furnished two Village Libraries from collections made

towards the Mission Fund. His plan was to avoid sectarianism, in his advocacy of Education and Temperance, but to closely abide by moral and religious principles of generally applicable character. He feels reason for joy at the retrospect of his labours, and believes that the benefits of the Temperance Cause, and the good works of those who forward it, are of an established and progressive character, and will have vast and happy consummation in another state of existence.

These exertions should not be allowed to decline for want of means. Those who cannot go to the work can co-operate effectually by assisting to send others, and what could be more narrow than backwardness in such a cause? what more patriotic than to serve, in a most important manner, those who have the strongest claims, as regards privations, country, and disposition, on benevolent endeavours? A Missionary might, very profitably, blend cottage and field and garden economy, with his other teachings, and thus be very useful to the Settlements. He might recommend teachers who could occupy the sacred desk on Sabbaths—might urge domestic education where schools could not be easily established, and forward the formation of small Libraries, consisting of books of undoubted value, as regards useful knowledge and good morals. The prospect opens—the moral field is white for the harvest,—let advantage be taken of opportunities, and blessings incalculable may be expected to result.

In answer to questions put to the Secretary of the Halifax Temperance Society, that officer expressed his views to the following effect: He considers the Mission of great consequence, respecting the formation of Societies, the rallying of those in existence, the furnishing of youth with arguments and inducements in favour of Temperance, and, generally, the supplying of that interest which attaches to the visits of strangers, and the dissemination of latest intelligence and reasoning on the subject.

The Secretary thinks that portions of the Province where future endeavours may be urged, should be well tried

by the Missionary;—that he should stay a few days in each place, to become acquainted with the friends of Temperance and with Temperance and general statistics; should lead on confidently to renewed and increased exertion, and revisit places, at intervals of six or eight weeks,—thus watching over the work which he had commenced, preventing the success of foes, and strengthening the hands of friends of moral reform.

Respecting the conduct of the missionary who represents the Temperance principle, he should, it is submitted, be of good deportment and address; impressed with the dignity of the work in which he is engaged, and extremely careful that his manner of life bring no reproach on a cause in which the interests of many are so deeply concerned. Religion as well as Education, should go hand in hand with Temperance, but an avoidance of sectarian subjects would be desirable in him who has a message of charity to persons of all sects and parties, and who should, under that message, look on every man as alike his brother.

The continued junction of Educational objects, with the advocacy of Temperance, is recommended; the establishment or improvement of Common Schools, domestic or general, should be urged in every settlement; and some attempt at literary or scientific institutions, where the population would warrant such modes of improvement, might be made. An humble beginning, such as the reading of good books and explanations of them, might be tried, wherever a few well informed persons resided, surrounded by a well inclined people, and thus recreation and improvement might mark the long evenings of winter. An interesting field for most of these operations spreads, in every direction, within 20 miles of Halifax.

Co-operation is of great consequence in all matters which have not established means of sustenance, and which depend on the good feelings of a great number of people. To this end, connected with Temperance, Provincial and County Conventions greatly conduce; practical difficulties, respecting travelling of delegates, might be removed by honest zeal,—and what cause can be much

more worthy of animated energies than that under consideration? The assistance of country societies, by way of advice, contribution, or simultaneous movement, might be of great advantage. To accomplish any approach to effective co-operation, the appointment of a resident agent, who should visit, lecture, and collect, in Halifax and its vicinity, and conduct the general correspondence, would be very desirable, if circumstances permitted such appointment. The extensive circulation of a periodical publication, as an organ and connecting link of the several societies,—and the maintenance of the interest of regular meetings of societies, might also greatly tend to the co-operation which is so essential to full success. Connected with the subject of regular meetings, it may be observed,—that in the absence of formal addresses or lectures, a subject for conversation might be named, for the evening of meeting, and a few persons be appointed to speak in succession. Such conversations might be on general themes, consistent with the rule which excludes controversial topics of religion or politics, but a temperance and moral bearing should be their continued characteristic. The chairman of the occasion should be informed respecting those expected to speak, and should endeavour to support the life and vigour of such meetings, by invitations to speakers, brief occasional remarks, and kind yet strict attention concerning good order.—Ward Committees might be efficient, and the active assistance of Ladies would secure excellent results.

The Committee have to lament that the free intercourse, on Temperance matters, with the military, has been checked by arrangements that originated elsewhere. The men may attend Temperance meetings, however, and difficulties which have arisen may soon disappear; in the mean time, the distribution of Temperance tracts and papers, earnest entreaties respecting the pledge, and respecting faithfulness to it, might have much salutary effect. The cause, among this class of men, has long been considered a matter of deep interest. The comfort and respectability of Soldiers greatly depend on Temperance; their example may be beneficial, or otherwise

among communities where they reside; their itinerating mode of life gives them a wide sphere of influence, and their chief temptations, and offences, and sufferings, may be traced to the intoxicating draught.

The number of Military enrolled by the Secretary during his term of office, is stated at 786;—many joined the St. Mary's Society also. The 34th and 96th Regts. had Regimental Societies, which made successful progress.—Excellent instances of zealous consistency, under trying circumstances, in Nova-Scotia, Canada, and elsewhere, occurred, connected with the Military,—proving, abundantly, that moral firmness and rectitude were cherished virtues in that important class of fellow-subjects, and that they appreciated, respected, and abided by, their principles, in a manner that was in accordance with their professions, and that reflected honour on them. These men have gone to various parts of the vast empire of Britain, spreading, it is hoped, by example and precept, a virtue most essential to the highest character of soldier and citizen.

The number of civilians on the Society's List, exclusive of those who are known to have given up or forfeited rights of membership, is 1,600; in all, of civilians and military now in Halifax, 1,800. The Halifax Temperance Society gladly alludes to the powerful auxiliaries which the cause has obtained, in the St. Mary's, and St. Mary's and St. Patrick's, Societies, in connection with the Roman Catholic Church. The former is of some years standing, and numbers 5,160,—the latter has been in existence only a few months, and reckons 500 members.—Great and very delightful results have been experienced from this branch of the "Total Abstinence" progress; and the best and warmest wishes are indulged respecting further advances. Total in Halifax, 7,460 on the lists of the three Societies. The organization of the "Halifax Temperance Society" consists in taking the Pledge, enrolling the name, and accepting a Medal;—within a few months past a list of subscribers to the Mission Fund, at 4d. a month and upwards, has been formed: Every member who can afford the small contribution, should feel its

payment a part of the solemn duty of membership. The Society may be considered to be on the Total Abstinence principle; although the modified Pledge has not been abolished, none but the more general has been administered within the last twelve months.

The effect of Temperance principles on society generally, is believed to be very great. A shrinking from open exhibition of the vice of Intemperance may be said to be universal; the miserable exceptions are so few, as to be bye-words and generally noted warnings to communities. Drinking habits, of a more moderate character, have greatly declined, and, it is hoped, are still declining;—these nurseries of Intemperance should be considered the object of energetic though kind and courteous solicitude.—Drunkards are living horrors which continually appeal to spectators against the vice they themselves practice; but the moderate drinker of intoxicating Liquors, may unconsciously, encourage and tempt the unwary, he may be the cause of misery to those who have the strongest claims on his sympathies, and he helps to support a branch of manufacture and traffic, whose decrease all good men must desire.

In conclusion, it may be urged, that the cause now advocated is closely connected with the best interests of individuals, families, the Province, and the Empire;—that perseverance in a judicious course of action, under the Divine blessing, must be gloriously successful;—that assistance is now greatly required, to remove difficulties, and to make further progress; and that every man may well admit that contribution to this good work may be ranked among the most efficient charities,—among holy sympathies which include concerns of body and mind,—which exalt the benefactor and the benefitted,—and which are in accordance with true piety, sound reason, and the most wise economy.

To the Public.

The Missions, described in the foregoing pages, have caused a debt, which the Committee are very anxious to discharge.—The Committee earnestly desire also, to continue the system of Missions, believing that great good may result. In behalf of these objects a direct appeal will be made. The Committee feel confident that the work in which they are engaged, will not be allowed to languish, when the public examine its merits, and recollect that a small exertion on their part, may bid it advance prosperously.